

Message Text

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14

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR YO XF

SUBJ: YUGOSLAVIA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

1. ACCORDING TO WESTERN NEWSMEN PRESENT, AT WEEKLY FOREIGN SECRETARIAT PRESS CONFERENCE AFTERNOON OCT 11 FSFA SPOKESMAN MILAN ZUPAN DUCKED QUESTION OF SOVIET OVERFLIGHTS OF YUGOSLAVIA IN MIDEAST RESUPPLY OPERATION. ASKED DIRECTLY IF SUCH FLIGHTS HAD BEEN APPROVED, ZUPAN SAID HE COULD NOT ELABORATE ABOUT THE AID OF OTHER COUNTRIES TO THE ARAB NATIONS, THAT HE SIMPLY WAS NOT INFORMED.

2. BELGRADE MEDIA AND THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE TANJUG BULLETIN CARRIED ZUPAN'S STATEMENTS CONDEMNING ISRAELI "AGGRESSIVE ACTS" IN THE "BRUTAL BOMBING OF CITIES AND CIVILIAN TARGETS" IN SYRIA AND EGYPT, WHICH INVOLVED "THE LARGE SCALE KILLING OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN", BUT OMITTED ANY REFERENCE TO THE QUESTION REGARDING OVERFLIGHTS OR THE RESPONSE.

3. IN EDITION DISTRIBUTED OCT 12, RED TANJUG BULLETIN (ROUND-UP OF FOREIGN PRESS REACTION DISTRIBUTED TO TOP PARTY AND GOVERNMENT CIRCLES) CARRIED BELGRADE DATELINE UPI ITEM SAYING
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THAT A YUGOSLAV GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE SAID HE "COULD NOT

COMMENT ON REPORT ACCORDING TO WHICH THE SOVIETS HAVE SOUGHT PERMISSION TO SEND MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO THE ARABS ACROSS YUGOSLAV AIRSPACE". THE REPORT ADDED THAT YUGOSLAVIA COULD BE USED AS AN "AIR BRIDGE" FOR SOVIET MATERIALS, AND TIED THIS TO SOVIET AMBASSADOR STEPANOV'S OCT 9 CALL ON TITO. IT NOTED THAT THIS AIR BRIDGE HAD BEEN USED BY THE SOVIETS IN THE SIX DAY WAR IN 1967, AND TWO YEARS BEFORE THAT MILITARY AID TO THE MIDDLE EAST WAS "SENT FROM HUNGARY BY WAY OF YUGOSLAVIA, AS IS KNOWN FROM MILITARY CIRCLES".

4. PRESS OCT 11 REPORTED SESSION PREVIOUS DAY OF FEDERAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (FEC) WHICH TOOK UP MIDDLE EAST, DETERMINED THAT "EVENTS WILL REQUIRE URGENT ACTION FOR A FAST AND EFFECTIVE RESTRAINT OF ISRAELI AGGRESSION", AND ADOPTED MEASURES FOR THE FURTHER RENDERING OF SUPPORT AND DIRECT ASSISTANCE TO THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION BEING WAGED BY THE ARAB COUNTRIES". MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND BLOOD PLASMA WERE THE ONLY AID ITEMS MENTIONED.

5. COMMENT. THE FACT THAT EVEN THE ZUPAN FINESSE OF THE OVER-FLIGHT QUESTION WAS ELIMINATED FROM PRESS REPORTS OF THE CONFERENCE INDICATES YUGOSLAV SENSITIVITY ABOUT PUBLICITY ON THE SUBJECT. WE DOUBT YUGOSLAVS HAVE TO BE PRESSURED BY SOVIETS ON THIS SUBJECT, GIVEN PAST AND PRESENT PLEDGES OF YUGOSLAV SUPPORT FOR THE ARAB CAUSE WHICH WOULD HARDLY PLACE THEM IN POSITION OF OPPOSING SOVIET AID.
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